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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Operations Center

(GUYANA WORKING GROUP)

Situation Report No. VII

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* DOD PA
Duty Officer
NMCC (LDX)

Situation in Guyana as of 1130 Hours (EST), November 20, 1978

The Guyanese Crisis Committee has approved our offer of medical evacuation and grave registration units, including up to 12 helicopters. The National Military Command Center (NMCC) is mobilizing the units. The helicopters are expected to arrive early November 21.

Our DCM to Panama, who is helping at Georgetown, and a consular officer are flying to Jonestown this morning with three press representatives and Guyanese officials and will make an initial assessment of the situation there. They are expected to report their findings this afternoon. Another flight will bring our pathological and poisons experts to Jonestown this afternoon. Ambassador Burke also now advises that the 4-man DOD communications team will fly up to Jonestown today. They are expected to begin transmissions from Jonestown this afternoon.

The Air Force is investigating whether the Matthews Ridge airstrip can take aircraft as large as C-130s so that it can be used as a staging area for operations in Jonestown. The airstrip is about 35 miles away from Jonestown, and its use would considerably ease supply problems and facilitate evacuation activities.

The Guyanese Government has requested the loan of two Otter or similar aircraft. The American Peoples Temple crisis has overtaxed Guyana's domestic air transport system, which is critical for the supply of many isolated Guyanese communities. NMCC has no Otters; but is looking into alternative ways of responding to this request.

Ambassador Burke advises that autopsies have been performed on the bodies of Congressman Ryan and the four others killed during the attack at Port Kaituma and that they are ready for transport back to the United States. SCS is coordinating their movement with the NMCC. Also Ambassador Burke advises that Guyana will probably require that autopsies be done only on a representative sample of the dead at Jonestown before authorizing the return of the bodies to the United States.

John Bushnell, ARA Director,
Guyana Working Group

Thomas G. Martin
Senior Watch Officer

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